

Sarah Ganong
Campaigns Director,
Connecticut Working Families

Testimony Regarding H.B. 6551 AAC Environmental Air Quality

Dear Senator Cohen, Representative Gresko, and distinguished members of the Environmental Committee, thank you for your time and attention! My name is Sarah Ganong, and I'm a Hartford resident as well as the Campaigns Director of Connecticut Working Families. Working Families is a grassroots political organization that fights for an economy that works for everyone and a democracy where every voice matters. We are also members of the growing Renew CT coalition.

I write today with a request for an addition of language regarding Green Justice Zones to the underlying House Bill 6551, AAC Environmental Air Quality. We know that residents of our distressed municipalities are much more likely to live near sources of pollution, from fossil fuel power plants to trash incinerators. We know that asthma rates are higher in communities with more Black and brown children.

But with the addition of language regarding Green Justice Zones to HB 6551, we can begin to right these historic wrongs and transform communities that have been for far too long overburdened with pollution. We can clean up pollution, deploy clean and renewable technologies, and create jobs where they are most needed. Creating two pilot Green Justice Zones could dramatically reduce industrial pollution and provide funding for environmental remediation projects. Communities will decide on the projects most suited to their specific needs, whether that's lead service pipe replacement, weatherization efforts on neighborhood homes, solar panel installation, or construction of microgrid -- and more. Providing funding for union-led programs to equip Zone residents with necessary job skills will ensure that labor justice and environmental justice go hand-in-hand.

Thank you for your time,

Sarah Ganong,
On behalf of Connecticut Working Families